

I. Claims 2-6, 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

These claims have been amended above in response thereto.

II. Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Connan (U.S. Patent No. 5,775,386). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The limitation of claim 14 has been added to claim 13 except the term "through hole" has been changed to --hole--. The Examiner has indicated in the outstanding Official Action that claim 14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Thus, claim 13 should be in condition for allowance.

III. Claims 1-3, 7-9 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Connan (U.S. Patent No. 5,775,386) in view of Hauser et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,551,486). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The limitation of claim 4 has been added to independent claims 1, 7, 8 and 9, and the limitation of dependent claim 16 has been added to independent claim 15 except the term "through hole" has been changed to --hole--. The Examiner has indicated that claims 4 and 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Thus, these claims should be in condition for allowance.



Applicants acknowledge the allowable subject matter as indicated on page 5 of the outstanding Office Action.

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims are in condition for allowance and allowance is respectfully requested.

It is not believed that extensions of time are required beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in accompanying documents. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are necessary and hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and any fees required therefor are hereby authorized to be charged to our Deposit Account No. 11-1243.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee deficiency, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 11-1243.

Respectfully submitted,

KLIMA & PEZZLO, P.C.



William L. Klima
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 32,422

Date: August 7, 2000

P.O. Box 2855
Stafford, VA 22555-2855
(540) 657-9344

